



MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor Tomzak and Members of City Council
FROM: Beverly R. Cameron, City Manager
DATE: March 20, 2012
SUBJECT: City Manager's Update

Highlights of major activities and other notable developments:

HazMat Exercise - On March 14, the Fire Department's Regional Hazardous Materials Response Team participated in a full-scale emergency exercise held at Quantico Marine Corps Base. The base is required to conduct a full-scale exercise annually, and this year's exercise involved a railroad tank car with a release of an unknown hazardous product. During the drill, the Fredericksburg Hazmat Team served as technical experts and assisted other agencies that participated in the response effort.

Members of the Fredericksburg team integrated well with other organizations and the total team effort resulted in a quick resolution to the scenario. The Hazmat Team members were able to make entry, stop the leak, and affect a simulated rescue of one of their own, all within a time span of less than fifteen minutes. Facilitators and members of the organizations involved spoke highly of the expertise and professionalism of the Fredericksburg Fire Department personnel. Other agencies involved in the exercise included: United States Marine Corps, Quantico Fire Department, Stafford Fire and Rescue, Prince William County Department of Fire and Rescue, Red Cross, CSX Railroad, and [HEPACO](#).

City Prevails in Cleanup Effort - The environmental hazard located at 1928 Lafayette Boulevard has finally been cleaned up, after the property owner was charged by the Zoning Officer with operating a junkyard in a single family residential district. It took a flurry of paperwork, assistance from the City Attorney's Office and the Commonwealth's Attorney's Office, and multiple court hearings, but the City has been successful in prosecuting and winning the court case against the offending property owner. This case, using the new criminal violation standards in the Zoning Ordinance, convinced the property owner that he had no other choice but to bring his property into compliance. The successful outcome of this criminal matter means the City was able to avoid hiring a private contractor to do the cleanup, thus saving the City thousands of dollars.

Fair Housing Events - The Department of Planning and Community Development is coordinating two events focused on promoting fair housing awareness. At 7 p.m. on March 29, the City will host a Fair Housing Public Meeting at the Bragg Hill Family Life

Center (Classrooms A and B) to educate City residents about their rights under fair housing laws and to hear from residents about previous housing experiences. On April 10 at 9 a.m., the City and disAbility Resource Center will co-host a Fair Housing Seminar at the Central Rappahannock Regional Library Headquarters. National and local level experts will speak about fair housing laws, rights and obligations of landlords/tenants, accessibility for disabled residents, and other related topics. This forum welcomes landlords, residents, property managers, housing program administrators, realtors and others. Both events are free and open to the public.

HUD Awards Funding to Two Local Homeless Programs - On March 13, U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Secretary Shaun Donovan announced that for the third year in a row, the Fredericksburg Regional Continuum of Care (CoC) will receive new federal funding for local homeless programs. The City's Community Development Planner, Marne Sherman, is part of the CoC's Grant Writing Committee which drafted the successful grant application in October 2011.

The Thurman Brisben Center will receive \$36,804 to provide permanent housing assistance to twelve homeless households over a one-year period through its new FISH program. Targeted rental assistance will be provided to at least five homeless households with children, two chronically homeless families, two veterans, and one unaccompanied youth.

Micah Ecumenical Ministries will receive \$27,848 to provide permanent housing assistance through the Journey Program. Rental subsidies will house seven persons, including one veteran, who have been continuously struggling with homelessness for a year or more or who have had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years (per the HUD definition of chronically homeless).

Both local agencies will leverage other resources to ensure that the newly housed clients will have stability in their residence and work toward financial independence over the subsidy period and beyond. A grand total of \$213,507 in federal CoC funding was awarded (two new and three renewal applications) to the Fredericksburg Regional CoC through the 2011 competition.

Managing the Nightlife – On March 6, the Police Department hosted another well attended Managing the Nightlife seminar, which is a bi-annual training program that addresses issues that are of particular concern to businesses that serve alcohol. In attendance were employees of the Otter House, Sunken Well Tavern, Capital Ale, Spirits, and Aladins. With the goal of reducing arrests and the need for police services at these businesses, the officers leading the program presented information on the following topics:

- Fire Codes and occupancy limits
- ABC regulations and State alcohol laws
- Fake IDs and tips for dealing with intoxicated people
- Legal issues and liability

Statewide Tornado Drill – On March 20, City employees participated in the Virginia Department of Emergency Management Statewide Tornado Drill. Various departments used this opportunity to discuss emergency procedures for their unique workplace environment and employees. Additional training and unannounced practice drills are being planned for some departments, as a result of participation. The safety information provided was encouraged to be brought home and shared with family and friends (see below).

Information provided from the National Oceanic and Atmosphere Administration (NOAA)

Tornado Safety

[Roger Edwards](#)

Storm Prediction Center
Norman, Oklahoma

There is no such thing as guaranteed safety inside a tornado. Freak accidents happen; and the most violent tornadoes can [level and blow away](#) almost any house and its occupants. Extremely violent F5 tornadoes are very rare, though. Most tornadoes are actually much weaker and can be survived using these safety ideas...

🚧Prevention and practice before the storm: At home, have a family tornado plan in place, based on the kind of dwelling you live in and the safety tips below. Know where you can take shelter in a matter of seconds, and practice a family tornado drill at least once a year. Have a pre-determined place to meet after a disaster. [Flying debris](#) is the greatest danger in tornadoes; so store protective coverings (e.g., mattress, sleeping bags, thick blankets, etc) in or next to your shelter space, ready to use on a few seconds' notice. When a tornado watch is issued, think about the drill and check to make sure all your safety supplies are handy. Turn on local TV, radio or NOAA Weather Radio and stay alert for warnings. Forget about the old notion of opening windows to equalize pressure; the tornado will blast open the windows for you! If you shop frequently at certain stores, learn where there are bathrooms, storage rooms or other interior shelter areas away from windows, and the shortest ways to get there. All [administrators of schools](#), shopping centers, nursing homes, hospitals, sports arenas, stadiums, mobile home communities and offices should have a tornado safety plan in place, with easy-to-read signs posted to direct everyone to a safe, close by shelter area. Schools and office building managers should regularly run well-coordinated drills. If you are planning to build a house, especially east of the Rockies, consider an underground tornado shelter or [an interior "safe room"](#).

🚧Know the signs of a tornado: Weather forecasting science is not perfect and some tornadoes do occur without a tornado warning. There is no substitute for staying alert to the sky. Besides an [obviously visible tornado](#), here are some things to look and listen for:

1. Strong, persistent rotation in the cloud base.
 2. Whirling dust or debris on the ground under a cloud base -- tornadoes sometimes [have no funnel!](#)
 3. Hail or heavy rain followed by either dead calm or a fast, intense wind shift. Many tornadoes are wrapped in heavy precipitation and can't be seen.
 4. Day or night - Loud, continuous roar or rumble, which doesn't fade in a few seconds like thunder.
 5. Night - Small, bright, blue-green to white [flashes at ground level](#) near a thunderstorm (as opposed to silvery lightning up in the clouds). These mean power lines are being snapped by very strong wind, maybe a tornado.
 6. Night - *Persistent* lowering from the cloud base, illuminated or silhouetted by lightning -- especially if it is [on the ground](#) or there is a blue-green-white power flash underneath.
-

WHAT TO DO...

🚩 **In a house with a basement:** Avoid windows. Get in the basement and under some kind of sturdy protection (heavy table or work bench), or cover yourself with a [mattress](#) or sleeping bag. Know where very heavy objects rest on the floor above (pianos, refrigerators, waterbeds, etc.) and do not go under them. They may fall down through a weakened floor and crush you.

🚩 **In a house with no basement, a dorm, or an apartment:** Avoid windows. Go to the lowest floor, small center room (like a bathroom or closet), [under a stairwell](#), or in an interior hallway with no windows. Crouch as low as possible to the floor, facing down; and cover your head with your hands. A [bath tub](#) may offer a shell of partial protection. Even in an interior room, you should cover yourself with some sort of thick padding ([mattress](#), blankets, etc.), to protect against [falling debris](#) in case the roof and ceiling fail.



🚩 **In an office building, hospital, nursing home or skyscraper:** Go directly to an enclosed, windowless area in the center of the building -- *away from glass* and on the lowest floor possible. Then, crouch down and cover your head. Interior stairwells are usually good places to take shelter, and if not crowded, allow you to get to a lower level quickly. Stay off the elevators; you could be trapped in them if the power is lost.

🚩 **In a car or truck:** Vehicles are [extremely dangerous](#) in a tornado. If the tornado is visible, far away, and the traffic is light, you may be able to drive out of its path by moving at right angles to the tornado. Otherwise, park the car as quickly and safely as possible -- out of the traffic lanes. [It is safer to get the car out of mud later if necessary than to cause a crash.] Get out and seek shelter in a sturdy building. If in the open country, run to low ground away from any cars (which may roll over on you). Lie flat and face-down, protecting the back of your head with your arms.

[Avoid seeking shelter under bridges](#), which can create deadly traffic hazards while offering little protection against flying debris.

❑ **In the open outdoors:** If possible, seek shelter in a sturdy building. If not, lie flat and face-down on low ground, protecting the back of your head with your arms. Get as far away from trees and cars as you can; they may be blown onto you in a tornado.

❑ **In a shopping mall or large store:** Do not panic. Watch for others. Move as quickly as possible to an interior bathroom, storage room or other small enclosed area, away from windows.

❑ **In a church or theater:** Do not panic. If possible, move quickly but orderly to an interior bathroom or hallway, away from windows. Crouch face-down and protect your head with your arms. If there is no time to do that, get under the seats or pews, protecting your head with your arms or hands.

❑ **At school:** Follow the drill! Go to the interior hall or room in an orderly way as you are told. Crouch low, head down, and protect the back of your head with your arms. Stay away from windows and large open rooms like gyms and auditoriums.

❑ **In a mobile home:** Get out! Even if your home is tied down, you are probably safer outside, even if the only alternative is to seek shelter out in the open. Most tornadoes can destroy even tied-down mobile homes; and it is best not to play the low odds that yours will make it. If your community has a tornado shelter, go there fast. If there is a sturdy permanent building within easy running distance, seek shelter there. Otherwise, lie flat on low ground away from your home, protecting your head. If possible, use open ground away from trees and cars, which can be blown onto you.

AFTER THE TORNADO...

Keep your family together and wait for emergency personnel to arrive. Carefully render aid to those who are injured. Stay away from power lines and puddles with wires in them; they may still be carrying electricity! Watch your step to avoid broken glass, nails, and other sharp objects. Stay out of any heavily damaged houses or buildings; they could collapse at any time. Do not use matches or lighters, in case of leaking natural gas pipes or fuel tanks nearby. Remain calm and alert, and listen for information and instructions from emergency crews or local officials.